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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 11 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventeenth session, held in Doha, Qatar, from 7 to 9 December 1996.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33, 53 and 151, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nasser Bin Hamad AL KHALIFA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventeenth session, held in Doha, Qatar, from 7 to 9 December 1996

At the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its seventeenth session in Qatar from 7 to 9 December 1996 under the chairmanship of His Highness the Amir. The meeting was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai;

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of Saudi Arabia;

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman;

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait.

The leaders of the GCC countries expressed their happiness at the recovery of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, and at his restoration to good health so that the propitious course taken by the GCC may be maintained by virtue of His Highness's well-known commitment to it.

The Council expressed its gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman and to his discerning Government for the pains they had taken in performing the duties of the chairmanship of the Council during its sixteenth session.

The Council expressed its strong approval of the opening address given by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, in his capacity as Chairman of its current session. It is particularly appreciative of His Highness's call for more active cooperation among the GCC countries in all fields, including scientific and technical activities, for the establishment of joint scientific research centres, particularly in such important areas for member States as water and energy issues and international trade liberalization, and for greater scope to be accorded to the important role of the private sector in promoting the future development of the GCC.

The Council reviewed the progress achieved by cooperation in the political, military, economic, social and legal fields and in the areas of security and information. It considered the reports and recommendations submitted by the GCC Ministerial Council and Ministerial Committees, and it affirmed its determination to promote further progress on a wider and more inclusive scale in order to advance security, stability and prosperity and meet the aspirations of the peoples of member States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the GCC Statute.

The Council further reviewed current political and security issues and the present situation at the regional and international levels.

Implementation of the Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq's aggression against Kuwait

The Council discussed progress made in the implementation of the Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. It noted with deep regret that the Iraqi Government was still pursuing a policy

of procrastination with regard to the discharge of some fundamental aspects of its international obligations, namely the complete elimination of its weapons of mass destruction, the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages, compliance with the compensation mechanism, the return of all Kuwaiti property, and the requirement to refrain from hostile or provocative acts against neighbouring States in compliance with Security Council resolution 949 (1994).

The Council expressed its deep concern that the Iraqi Government was continuing to conceal deadly weapons and to hinder the work of the United Nations Special Commission entrusted with the task of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

In this context, the Council affirmed its continuing support for the efforts of the Special Commission and the readiness of the GCC countries to continue providing financial and political support as a contribution to the success of its work. It calls upon the international community to give expression to its collective responsibility to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions and to continue to provide material, political and moral support to the efforts of the Special Commission in order to ensure that its work can continue and that it can complete the tasks entrusted to it and its endeavour to eliminate weapons of mass destruction of all types.

The Council again expressed its wholehearted sympathy with the Iraqi people in its suffering and in the plight in which it finds itself owing to the reduced standard of living and deplorable health conditions for which the Iraqi Government alone bears full responsibility. The Council welcomes the announcement by the United Nations that Iraq has accepted the plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) so as to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people, and it calls upon the Iraqi Government to cooperate with the United Nations honestly and seriously in ensuring the proper and meticulous implementation of the resolution.

The Council reviewed the recent alarming developments in the situation in northern Iraq and expressed its concern at their possible repercussions for the region. In the light of its established position that the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq must be preserved, the Council expresses regret that certain neighbouring States have intervened in northern Iraq. It calls upon those States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq, given that such interference would pose a threat to international peace and security.

In this context, the Council affirmed the importance of maintaining the unified, well-established and cohesive position adopted by the Coalition countries until such time as Iraq's peaceful intentions can be ascertained and the Iraqi Government has complied fully with all of the provisions of Security Council resolution 687 (1990) and the other relevant United Nations resolutions. It expressed its support for and its appreciation of all the efforts made by the Coalition countries and all the measures they had taken to secure Iraq's full and meticulous compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council.

The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran

(a) The occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Council reviewed recent developments in the situation with regard to Iran's occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. It noted that the Iranian Government was continuing to take measures aimed at perpetuating its occupation of the islands by pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by

use of force, which constitutes an insistence on further pursuing its unwarranted and provocative measures. The Council reiterated its profound regret that the Islamic Republic of Iran was maintaining its refusal to respond positively to the repeated, earnest and sincere calls for a peaceful resolution of the dispute that have been made by the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Damascus Declaration countries, the Council of the League of Arab States and the Arab Summit Conference. The Council further expressed its disapproval of the successive Iranian measures taken on the islands and its continuing concern at the possible consequences of the Iranian Government's insistence on pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force. Such measures represent a violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates and an infringement of its rights with respect to the islands. They also jeopardize security and stability in the region and are incompatible with the principles and norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the principles of good-neighbourliness and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity as they concern the States of the region.

The Council renews its affirmation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands in question and of its unconditional support for all the peaceful measures the United Arab Emirates is taking with a view to restoring the exercise of that sovereignty. It reiterates its call to the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands, to desist from pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force, to suspend the implementation of any measures taken unilaterally, to remove any facilities unilaterally installed on the islands and to resolve the ongoing dispute in a peaceful manner in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the question to the International Court of Justice.

(b) Relations with Iran

The Council discussed developments in connection with relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the light of its established position centred on the importance of relations based on good-neighbourliness, commitment to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, avoidance of the use or threat of use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, and the need for action to ensure the maintenance of security and stability in the region.

In this context, the Council expressed deep concern that the Islamic Republic of Iran had deployed surface-to-surface missiles in the Arabian Gulf and even on the three occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, thereby placing the GCC countries and their vital installations under direct threat. It further expressed its concern at Iran's continuing endeavour to acquire and build an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and to have a conventional and non-conventional weapons capability that surpasses its legitimate defence needs. Accordingly, in light of the international strategic importance of the Gulf region, the Council renewed its call to the international community and the relevant international organizations to make active efforts to transform that region into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council reviewed developments in the peace process in the Middle East and the problems besetting it as a result of the Israeli Government's pursuit of policies of procrastination in implementing the agreements already concluded with the Palestinian side and its attempts to renegotiate those agreements. These policies, together with the perpetuation of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and the obstacles being raised to the sincere

peace efforts being made by the international community, are in violation of the commitments and principles on which the peace process is based, of the relevant United Nations resolutions and of all confidence-building measures. The Council affirms its total rejection of these policies of the Israeli Government, given that they constitute a real danger that jeopardizes the chances for peace and portend a return to tension and to acts of violence. These policies may force the GCC countries to reconsider the steps taken vis-à-vis Israel in the context of the peace process. The Council renews its call to all the parties involved in the peace process, and first and foremost to the United States of America and the Russian Federation, to continue their efforts for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace that will restore legitimate rights and lay a lasting foundation for the security, stability and prosperity of all the peoples of the region.

In the light of the resolutions adopted at the Arab Summit Conference and of the established positions taken by the GCC countries calling for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with the principle of land for peace and on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), the Council stresses that it is important and indeed essential for the peace process to continue by means of the concrete and honest fulfilment of all the agreements reached and all the undertakings given. In this connection, it urges the Israeli Government:

To discharge its obligations with regard to the agreements already concluded with the Palestinian National Authority and, in particular, to withdraw its forces from Hebron, to release the Palestinian prisoners, to lift completely the economic embargo imposed on the Palestinian areas and to resume the final-status negotiations with the Palestinian side in all sincerity;

To withdraw fully from Jerusalem and to desist from pursuing the policies of demolishing homes, changing the character of Islamic sites and taking such measures to perpetuate the occupation in the Arab territories as the building and expansion of settlements;

To enable the Palestinian people to exercise all of its legitimate national rights, including its right to establish an independent State on its national soil;

To resume negotiations on the Syrian track from the point reached in previous rounds, and to withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary as it existed on 4 June 1967;

To withdraw completely from southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa, and to return all occupied territory to Lebanese sovereignty in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The Council affirms that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

The Council commends the international consensus in support of the peace process and appreciates the efforts being made by the European Union and its member States in the economic and political fields. In this context, the Council expressed its particular appreciation for the sincere efforts being made by France under the leadership of President Jacques Chirac.

Extremism, violence and terrorism

Affirming that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to any particular people or region, the Council renews its condemnation of such phenomena and its categorical rejection of all forms

of violence and terrorism, particularly those that are detrimental to security and stability in the region. It calls upon the international community to coordinate its efforts to halt acts of violence and terrorism, ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice, and prevent extremist and terrorist elements from using the territory of any State for purposes of obtaining funding or arms supplies and from availing themselves of the media to incite to acts of violence or terrorism.

The Council condemns the criminal acts of terrorism committed at Khobar, Saudi Arabia, and in Bahrain, taking the lives of innocent and peaceful citizens, causing a number of injuries and terrorizing blameless people. Proceeding from the principle of the shared destiny of the GCC countries and the global character of their security, the Council affirms that no act of terrorism, whatever its source and wherever it occurs, will ever undermine the security of the GCC countries or will ever detract from their stability and progress. It renews its support for any State member of the Council that is subjected to acts of terrorism.

Developments in the fields of coordination and cooperation

The Council reviewed the decisions taken by the GCC Ministerial Committees on facilitating the movement of members of the national workforce among member States and on the measures taken to promote Gulf patriotism. It welcomed those decisions and measures aimed at confirming and strengthening the propitious course embarked upon.

Military matters

The Council considered the reports of the defence ministers on their fifteenth meeting, held in Riyadh in November 1996. Believing in the common unity of destiny and expressing the resolve of the GCC countries to face the challenges and dangers threatening their security and stability in an efficient and effective manner, the Council decided to approve the recommendations of the defence ministers while stressing the importance of continuing to implement all aspects of military cooperation and of increasing the efficiency of the collective defence capability of the GGC countries with a view to promoting their integrated defence.

Security matters

The Council studied the processes of coordination and cooperation among the various security sectors and agencies of member States in the light of the results of the fifteenth meeting of the interior ministers, held in Muscat in November 1996, which reflected the outstanding level of security coordination and cooperation among member States and the extent to which it had been improved to cope with events and challenges. The Council expressed its satisfaction at the measures taken and the results achieved in this field, which would have a positive effect on all other fields of joint action.

Economic matters

The Council reviewed the reports of the Ministerial Committees on joint economic cooperation and the recommendations of the GCC Ministerial Council in their regard. It decided as follows:

1. The unified customs tariff and the establishment of a customs union

Pursuant to the gradual steps that continue to be taken towards the establishment of a customs union among the GCC countries and with a view to completing the necessary steps for the establishment of a Gulf common market, the Council endorsed a number of measures for the achievement of that goal.

They included the completion of the classification of goods into three categories for customs purposes (exempt, basic goods and other goods) and instructions to the finance and economy ministers to pursue discussions of the measures necessary to establish a customs union among the GCC countries and to submit a report to the Council at its next session on the agreed steps.

2. Limiting the dangers of smoking

In the context of the efforts being made by member States to limit the dangers of smoking, the Council decided to approve the recommendation submitted to it in this regard by the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation.

3. Common agricultural policy

The Council endorsed the amended formulation of the member States' common agricultural policy.

Legal affairs

The participants considered the decisions reached by the GCC justice ministers at their eighth meeting, held in Muscat on 20 and 21 October 1996, particularly their adoption for a four-year period of the Muscat Document on a unified personal-status code as a model law. They approved the Muscat Document in the form adopted by the ministers.

Information

The Council reviewed the decisions of the eighth meeting of information ministers, held at the seat of the GCC secretariat in October 1996, and the decisions of the Ministerial Committee on External Information, held in Bahrain in June 1996. It decided that the information agencies of member States should continue to keep pace with international developments in the information field in terms of the speedy transmission and dissemination of information and should make use of those developments to promote Gulf unity, advance the goals of the GCC and transmit a true and positive image of its countries in a manner calculated to strengthen the links and values that bring together the GCC countries and peoples.

The Council welcomed His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Bin Ibrahim al-Hegelan on the occasion of his participating in the work of a summit-level meeting for the first time since the leaders of the member States had accorded him the precious confidence of appointing him Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council. It wished him success.

The Council expressed its deep appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, and to the Government and people of Qatar for their warm reception and the kind hospitality and genuine sentiments of fraternity with which the Council had been received, and it commended the excellent arrangements that had been made.

The leaders of the GCC countries further commended the major role that His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of Qatar and Chairman of the current session of the Council, had played in the conduct of the meetings held, which had had a major impact in facilitating the adoption of important decisions and the achievement of results that were in keeping with the aspirations of the peoples of the GCC countries.

The Council looks forward to its next meeting, at its eighteenth session, to be held in Kuwait in December 1997 at the kind invitation of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait.